



Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Winter 2009

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SPRWS earns AAA bond rating

Saint Paul Regional Water Services' bond rating was recently upgraded by Standard & Poor's from AA+ to AAA. This is the highest rating given by S & P, reflecting the financial and operational strength of SPRWS.

"We are extremely proud to receive S& P's highest bond rating," said Steve Schneider, general manager. "It demonstrates that we have the ability to maintain the nation's best rating through both good and challenging economic times."

Other factors taken into account when determining the final rating include our customer base, local economy, utility management, and operational efficiency.

Specifically cited by S & P is the utility's "modest bonding for water treatment enhancements"—our new granular activated carbon filters.

So far, these filters have reduced our taste and odor complaints by 92 percent.

SPRWS is one of a only a few water utilities in the nation receiving an upgrade to AAA from S & P as part of their utility revenue bond criteria revisions. The upgrade reflects demonstrated credit criteria, including:

Strong financial metrics, including debt service coverage and cash.

Good economic fundamentals, such as the ability to handle such pressures as housing market vulnerabilities, employment softness, or cost of service inflation.

Solid management, which includes a demonstrated willingness to adjust rates and long-term planning to fund key service components like water supply or regulatory-driven capital expenditures, and the ability to serve the needs of a growing community.

Schneider to serve on national water board

Steve Schneider, general manager of Saint Paul Regional Water Services, has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA).

The AMWA is made up of CEOs and general managers of the country's largest publicly owned water systems. The 20-member Board of Directors governs the nation's only policy-making organization solely representing large metropolitan drinking water suppliers in matters of regulation, legislation, and security.

"We're very pleased that Steve will be

representing the Saint Paul area on the AMWA board," said Pat Harris, president of the Board of Water Commissioners and a member of the Saint Paul City Council. "I'm sure that the AMWA board members will value his contributions as much as we value his excellent services as general manager of SPRWS."

AMWA works with the United States Congress and federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to ensure safe and cost-effective federal drinking water laws and regulations that protect public health.

Our mission is to provide reliable, quality water and services at a reasonable cost.

To Serve You Better

To make a credit card payment, or to get information on your account status, call (651) 266-6350, 24 hours a day.

To talk to a Customer Service Representative call Customer Service at (651) 266-6350, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Bills may be paid in the following ways:

Credit Card

Over the telephone, 24 hours a day, or in person at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1900 Rice St., Maplewood. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express credit/debit cards.

Money Order or Check

In person, by return mail with your bill stub, or in one of our drop boxes:

For next-day processing, at McCarrons Center. The drop box is located in the visitor parking area; available 24 hours a day.

For 48-hour processing, located at Saint Paul City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd., West. Doors are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and visitors must pass through security.

Cash

In person only, at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Direct Payment Plan

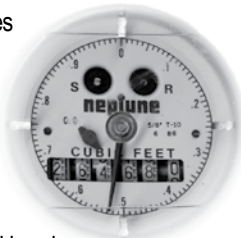
Have your payment deducted electronically from your checking or savings account. You'll still receive a statement; it will indicate which date the payment will be deducted from your account.

How to read your meter

Your meter is located inside your home, about one foot off of the floor in your basement. It could also be in a crawl space, pit in the floor, or utility room. It is not outside. The water usually comes in from the street side of the house. The meter sits on a water pipe that comes through the floor.

The head of the meter is about three inches in diameter and has both a large sweep hand and a small red hand.

Read the six numbers on the odometer at the bottom of the meter, where it says cubic feet, from left to right.

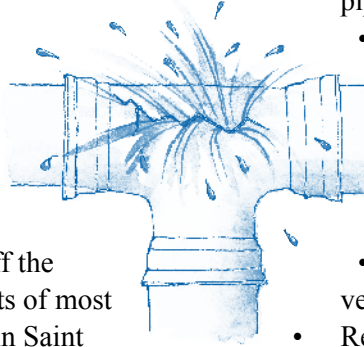


Keep your pipes and water meter from freezing this winter

Every winter hundreds of water meters and pipes freeze in area homes. You can take easy and inexpensive steps to prevent the damage, expense, and inconvenience associated with freezing pipes and meters.

The water meter sits several inches off the floor in the basements of most homes. Particularly in Saint Paul, many basements are partially finished and not used for main living quarters, so you might not notice colder temperatures or frosted areas along walls and the floor. Circulate the air to help keep these areas warm.

In some homes, the meter is in a separate, unheated room; keep the doors to that room open.



In addition:

- Keep your basement warm enough to keep the meter and pipes from freezing
- Check along the foundation for places cold wind can waft into the basement or into crawl spaces and plug them with insulation
- Close off crawl space vents and doors
- Replace or repair broken or cracked basement windows
- Install storm windows or cover basement windows with weather insulation kits
- Make sure that basement doors and windows close tightly
- Seal or caulk cracks in the wall
- Insulate pipes

Make sure the valves on either side of the water meter work and can be turned off if the meter freezes or the pipe bursts.

If the pipes near the meter are frozen, use a hair dryer to slowly apply heat to the pipe.

If your water meter freezes, the bottom plate will crack. Do not try to repair the meter yourself; call us.

It is unlawful for anyone other than a water utility employee to remove a water meter except in cases of emergency or with a permit by a plumber.

While the utility owns the meter and the couplings on either side of it, the responsibility to protect the meter from damage lies with the homeowner.

If we need to replace a damaged meter, including damage caused by freezing, the homeowner will be charged for the meter.

If you suspect damaged or frozen water pipes or water meter, call the SPRWS 24-hour dispatch office at 651-266-6868.

Don't forget your outdoor faucets!

To prevent the outside faucet from freezing, turn off the water connection at the valve inside the house and drain the exposed pipe before temperatures drop.

Through remodeling, the meter might have been boxed in with gypsum board. Add vents to allow warmer air to the meter. When remodeling, install vents, louvered cabinet doors, or other methods of allowing air to circulate around the meter. Be sure to allow access to the meter in the event that it needs to be repaired or replaced.

If the meter is in a pit in your home, make sure that the cover fits properly and has no cracks through which cold air can enter. The pipes, valves, and water meter in the pit should not touch the concrete walls, where it is colder.